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301 a position where it is not likely to get lost when running through the jungle, and where it is immediately accessible when wanted. The necklet also serves as a means of carrying bees'-wax, which is in constant use amongst the natives, a small ball of the wax being attached to one of the ends of the string of which the necklet is made.

291 As a rule, in everyday life, the men wear only a belt, or a belt and necklace. Those natives who visit the Settlement of 177 Port Blair have been required by the European officers to wear 834 a strip of cloth over the genitals. It has now become the rule to wear such a loin cloth whenever they are in the neighbourhood of a European. This, however, is a modern custom, and in former times the men went freely with no covering whatever, as do the inhabitants of the Little Andaman at the present time. As showing the extent to which the natives have been influenced in this matter by outside opinion, it may be mentioned that at the present day many of the younger men, particularly those who have been brought up at Port Blair, regard it as very immodest to be seen without some covering over the genitals.

301 On ceremonial occasions, such as the dance at the end of mourning, or a big dance-meeting, the men put on a number of ornaments. A common costume on such occasions consists of a belt, necklace, bracelets, and garters of netting and *Dentalium* shell. A belt and necklace of this kind are to be seen in Plate V, and garters are worn by the woman in Plate IX. An alternative costume for men consists of a set of ornaments of *Pandanus* leaf (belt, chaplet, bracelets and garters), decorated with *Dentalium* and other shells. Garters of this kind are shown in Plate XII.

301 Other objects are worn by the natives for magical purposes. 755 Chief amongst these are the strings made of human bones which ●751 are worn to prevent and cure sickness. The bones are attached to a length of rope, and this is generally decorated with shells or with *Dendrobium* skin. These strings of bones are worn most commonly as chaplets, necklaces or belts, but they may also be made into garters and bracelets. The bones of animals, such as pig, turtle, dugong, etc., are treated in exactly the same way

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as human bones, and ornaments made of them are commonly worn.

There are a number of other ornaments that are commonly worn, not only on ceremonial occasions, which, unlike the strings of human bones, do not obviously have a magical purpose. Such are necklaces made of various kinds of shells, and of mangrove seeds. At the present time the natives obtain beads from Port Blair and make ornaments of these.

The ordinary costume of the women is different from that of the men. Every woman and girl wears at least one belt of *Pandanus* leaf. There is one kind of belt that is always worn by married women and which may not be worn by unmarried girls. There is another kind of belt that may only be worn by unmarried girls. The women of the Southern tribes wear a bundle of leaves of the *Mimusops littoralis* laid one over another suspended from the front of the belt so as to cover the pudenda. In the Northern tribes it was formerly the custom for the women to wear a similar apron of the leaves of a plant called *čainyo*, and over this they also wore a tassel of shredded palm-leaf stem (*koro*). Within recent years the Northern tribes have given up their own custom in this matter and have adopted the custom of the Southern tribes.

Women often wear round the neck a piece of string similar to that worn by the men, but as they do not carry knives it does not serve the same purpose. It is more usual for a woman to wear a necklace of some sort. Nowadays they are rather fond of necklaces of beads which they obtain from the Settlement at Port Blair. In former times different kinds of shells were used, such as the *Dentalium octogonum*.

With the exception that men wear the belt of rope, and women wear the belt of *Pandanus* leaf and the apron of leaves, there is no difference between the ornaments worn by men and by women. On the occasion of a dance or other ceremony a woman may wear any of the objects described as being worn by men on such occasions. They also wear in the same way strings of human or animal bones.

One object which would seem to have a purely utilitarian purpose is the sling used for carrying children (called in *Aka-*

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show any fear, my informants said, the spirits would kill him, but if he were brave they would take him to their village, detaining him for a time, and then releasing him to return to his friends. A man to whom such an adventure has happened will be endowed for the rest of his life with power to perform magic. He will pay occasional visits to his friends the spirits. The natives told me of one such man who died not many years ago. At irregular intervals he used to wander off into the jungle by himself and remain absent for a few hours, sometimes for a day or two. He returned to the village after such an absence looking strange and wearing ornaments of shredded palm-leaf (*koro*) which he claimed had been placed upon him by the spirits.

Save for persons who have made friends with them, and have thereby become endowed with magical powers, all contact with the spirits of the jungle and the sea, or with the spirit of a dead man, is dangerous. The spirits are believed to be the cause of all sickness and of all deaths resulting from sickness. As a man wanders in the jungle or by the sea, the spirits come invisibly and strike him, whereupon he falls ill, and may die. A man or woman is more likely to be attacked by the spirits if he or she is alone, and it is therefore always better to be in company when away from the village. The spirits rarely venture into the village itself, though they may prowl round it, particularly at night. They are more dangerous at night than during the day.

There are many objects that are believed to have the power of keeping spirits at a distance, and thus of preserving human beings from the danger of sickness. Amongst the most important of these are fire, arrows, human bones, bees'-wax, and red paint. A man or a woman leaving a hut to go only a few yards at night will always carry a fire-brand as a protection against spirits that may be prowling in the neighbourhood. If the night be dark a torch is carried in addition to the fire-stick.

The Andamanese will never whistle at night, as they believe that the noise of whistling would attract spirits. On the other hand they believe that singing will keep the spirits away.

The spirits that haunt the woods and waters of a man's own home are regarded as being less dangerous to him than those of

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so far we have considered the properties of the plant only in so far as they make it dangerous to handle. It has other and beneficial properties. It is said that a man swimming in waters infested with sharks would be safe from them if he had a piece of the *Anadendron* creeper with him, in his belt or necklace. The creeper is also supposed to preserve anyone who carries it from the attacks of the sea spirits (*Jurua*).

The *Hibiscus tiliaceus* is a small tree from which the natives obtain the fibre which they make into rope, used now for harpoon lines and in former times for turtle-nets. The leaves of this tree are believed to have the power of keeping away the spirits of the sea. They have no efficacy, however, against the spirits of the forest. Leaves of the *Hibiscus tiliaceus* are used in the turtle-eating ceremony described in the last chapter. For cooking turtle the only wood that may be used is the *Hibiscus*. If any other wood were used the meat would not be good. In this connection it is necessary to point out an error in the statements of Mr Man. He says that the wood of the *alaba* must never be used for cooking turtle, though it may be used for cooking pig, and that *Puluga* is angry if this commandment is not observed and sends either the sun or moon to punish the offender[1]. There is evidently an error here. The *alaba* is the *Hibiscus tiliaceus*. Mr Man identifies it with the *Melochia velutina*, but this is an error. Now the custom in connection with the *Hibiscus* (*alaba*) is not that it may not be used for cooking turtle, but that no other kind of wood must be used. It is difficult to see how Mr Man fell into the error, unless he mistook a statement regarding the *yolba* (*Anadendron paniculatum*) for a statement relating to *alaba* (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). We have just seen that if the *Anadendron* comes in contact with turtle meat the meat will be bad, and that if it is burnt there will be a storm.

Another plant that provides fibre for thread is the *Gnetum edule*. There is a belief that the green creeper of this plant will drive away turtle, if a piece of it be taken in a canoe.

Magical properties are attributed to the *Ficus laccifera* tree. These trees are believed to be the home of the yet unborn souls of children. I was told in the North Andaman that if a tree of

[1] Man, *op. cit.* pp. 153 and 172.

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824 784 the species were cut there would be a storm. The bark of the aerial roots of the tree affords a fibre used in the Little Andaman for bow-strings, but only used in the Great Andaman for making personal ornaments. It is possible that some magical properties are attributed to the ornaments made from this fibre.

The *Pterocarpus dalbergioides* is one of the most striking trees of the Andamans. It has a very hard red wood, from which the natives make their sounding-boards. There is an obscure belief in the *A-Pučikwar* tribe (and possibly also in other tribes) that it is dangerous to look at the tree when it is in flower. I was twice told a story of how some people were affected by looking at the flowers, and either went mad or died. On one occasion my interpreter translated the words of my informant by saying "They saw the flowers, and went giddy, and they all went to hell (*jereg-l'ar-mugu*)." Men must be careful when the tree is in flower, not to look at it too long. In the North Andaman I was told that string games (*jipre*) must not be played when the *Pterocarpus* tree is in flower. They may be indulged in with safety at any other time of the year. (String games, according to one statement, were invented by the *Lau*, while another account attributes the invention to the crab.)

824 751 The *Tetranthera lancæfolia* is a small tree from which the natives obtain the wood for the shafts of their pig arrows. The leaves of this tree are believed to have the power to keep away the spirits of the forest. They are used in the pig-eating ceremony described in the last chapter. The wood is shredded and made into plumes, and these plumes are believed to have magical properties. They are worn by a man who has killed another, and are believed to protect him from the vengeance of the spirit of the dead man.

824 278 757 A common remedy for sickness of different kinds is a small tree called *gugma* in *Aka-Bea*, which Mr Man identifies as being *Trigonostemon longifolius*. The leaves of this tree are made into a bed for the patient to lie upon. They are also crushed and rubbed over the patient's body, or he is made to inhale the odour of the crushed leaves. The natives say that it is the "smell" of the plant that possesses medical properties. The

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827 A hiccough is supposed to be the result of inadvertently swallowing a tree lizard, whose call rather resembles the sound of a person hiccoughing.

The condition popularly called "pins and needles" or described as an arm or leg "going to sleep" is believed by the Andamanese to be due to the bite of a rat. If a man wakes up in the night with one of his limbs benumbed in this way, he believes that a rat has bitten him while he slept.

The Andamanese say that the bite of a civet-cat (*Paradoxurus*) will produce cramp. I was once told that if a man eats the flesh of the civet-cat and then goes into the water he will become "lame." This means, I think, that he will have cramp, and so will be unable to swim.

278 The flesh and particularly the fat of the flying fox (*Pteropus*) is believed to be a remedy for rheumatism. An old man who was suffering from this ailment once asked me to shoot for him some of these bats, which he cooked and ate.

784 If turtle-fat be permitted to burn in the fire there will be a storm.

751 Mention has already been made of the magical value attributed to human bones. They are esteemed as a means of
755 driving away spirits, and therefore of curing or preventing sickness. A human jaw-bone was hanging in my hut in such a position that it could swing in the wind. The natives attributed to this the illness from which I and several of them were suffering at the time, and asked me to put the bone away in a basket, where it could not move.

Bones of animals are made into ornaments in the same way as human bones, and magical properties of a similar kind seem to be attributed to them.

755 Of other objects possessing magical properties the most
372 important is fire. Fire is believed to have the power of keeping away spirits of the sea and of the forest. A fire is always kept alight beside a sick man or woman. For dysentery stones are heated in a fire and the patient is required to defecate on to these.

000 In conclusion, mention must be made of one favourite remedy

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connection of great importance between the affective dispositions underlying these and other customs and the complex affective disposition that we call the sex instinct. The nature of that connection, important as it is, lies outside the scope of this work.

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I remarked above that the explanation which I have given of the meaning of personal ornament does not apply to all the objects that the Andaman Islanders wear on their body, but only to certain of them. If an Andaman Islander be asked why he paints himself with white clay, or why he wears a belt or necklace of *Dentalium* shell he replies that he does so in order to look well; but if he be asked why he wears a string of human bones round his head or neck or waist, he gives quite a different answer, to the effect that he does so in order to protect himself from dangers of a special kind. According to circumstances he will say either that he is wearing the bones to cure himself of illness, or else that he wears them as a protection against spirits. Thus while some things are worn on the body in order to improve the personal appearance, and consequently, as explained above, to give the individual a sense of his own value, others are worn because they are believed to have a protective power, and thereby arouse in the person a sense of security. Exactly the some sort of protective power is attributed to things that cannot be worn on the body, such as fire, and it will therefore be convenient to consider together all the things that afford this kind of protection, whether they can be worn on the body or not.

The interpretation here offered is that the customs connected with this belief in the protective power of objects of various kinds are means by which is expressed and thereby maintained at the necessary degree of energy a very important social sentiment, which, for lack of a better term, I shall call the sentiment of dependence. In such a primitive society as that of the Andamans one of the most powerful means of maintaining the cohesion of the society and of enforcing that conformity to custom and tradition without which social life is impossible, is the recognition by the individual that for his security and well-being he depends entirely upon the society. Now for the Andaman Islander the society is not sufficiently concrete and particular

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to act as the object of such a sentiment, and he therefore feels his dependence upon the society not directly but in a number of indirect ways. The particular way with which we are now concerned is that the individual experiences this feeling of dependence towards every important possession of the society, towards every object which for the society has constant and important uses.

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The most prominent example of such an object is fire. It may be said to be the one object on which the society most of all depends for its well-being. It provides warmth on cold nights; it is the means whereby they prepare their food, for they eat nothing raw save a few fruits; it is a possession that has to be constantly guarded, for they have no means of producing it, and must therefore take care to keep it always alight; it is the first thing they think of carrying with them when they go on a journey by land or sea; it is the centre around which the social life moves, the family hearth being the centre of the family life, while the communal cooking place is the centre round which the men often gather after the day's hunting is over. To the mind of the Andaman Islander, therefore, the social life of which his own life is a fragment, the social well-being which is the source of his own happiness, depend upon the possession of fire, without which the society could not exist. In this way it comes about that his dependence on the society appears in his consciousness as a sense of dependence upon fire and a belief that it possesses power to protect him from dangers of all kinds.

The belief in the protective power of fire is very strong. A man would never move even a few yards out of camp at night without a fire-stick. More than any other object fire is believed to keep away the spirits that cause disease and death. This belief, it is here maintained, is one of the ways in which the individual is made to feel his dependence upon the society.

Now this hypothesis is capable of being very strictly tested by the facts, for if it is true we must expect to find that the same protective power is attributed to every object on which the social life depends. An examination of the Andamanese beliefs shows that this is so, and thereby confirms the hypothesis.

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In their daily life the Andamanese depend on the instrinsic qualities of the materials they use for their bows and arrows and

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harpoons and other hunting implements, and it can be shown that they do attribute to these implements and to the materials from which they are made powers of protection against evil. Moreover it is even possible to apply a quantitative test and show that the more important the place a thing occupies in the social life the greater is the degree of protective power attributed to it. Finally I shall be able to show that as different materials are used for special purposes so they are supposed to have certain special powers of protection against certain sorts of danger. Thus the hypothesis I have stated is capable of being as nearly demonstrated as is possible in such psychological enquiries as the one we are engaged in.

A man carrying his bow and arrows is supposed to be less likely to fall a victim to the spirits than one who has no weapons with him. One way of stopping a violent storm is to go into the sea (storms being supposed to be due to the spirits of the sea) and swish the water about with arrows. The natives sometimes wear a necklace formed of short lengths of the bamboo shaft of a fish-arrow. All the examples of such necklaces that I met with had been made from an old arrow. I asked a native to make one for me, and although he could readily have made one from bamboo that had never served as an arrow he did not do so, but used the shaft of one of his arrows. Such a necklace may therefore be described as an arrow in such a form that it can be worn round the neck and thus carried continually without trouble. The protective power of the bow is at first sight not quite so evident, but the material used for the string is regarded as possessing protective power, and to this I shall return shortly.

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The best demonstration of the truth of the explanation offered is to be found by considering the different vegetable fibres of which use is made. The most important of these are the *Anadendron paniculatum* (used for bow-strings and for fine string), the *Hibiscus tiliaceus* (used for rope) and the *Gnetum edule* (used for string, and inferior to the *Anadendron*). All these fibres are believed to possess power to keep away dangers, but there is a sort of specialisation in their use.

The fibre of the *Hibiscus* is used mainly in the hunting of turtle and big fish. Consequently the tree itself from which the

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fibre is obtained is believed to possess the power of warding off all dangers connected with turtle and the sea. There is a custom that turtle flesh may only be cooked with wood of the *Hibiscus*, otherwise it will be uneatable. In the turtle-eating ceremony the initiate who, as we shall see later, is in a condition of danger by reason of having eaten turtle for the first time after a period of abstention, is seated on *Hibiscus* leaves and holds a bundle of the same leaves before him. At the same ceremony the leaves of this tree are used in the dance, and the initiate is given a skewer made from its wood with which to feed himself. If for any reason the leaves of the *Hibiscus* are not obtainable when the ceremony is performed those of the *Myristica longifolia* are used instead. Now this is the tree from which the natives always make their canoe paddles, which, like ropes of *Hibiscus* fibre, are used in hunting turtle. This specialisation is therefore easy to understand; the natives habitually make use of the *Hibiscus* and the *Myristica* in turtle-hunting; they use the intrinsic qualities of these trees in their actual struggles with turtle and large fish, and by means of these qualities they are able to succeed in overcoming their prey; they therefore come to believe that these trees possess special powers which not only enable them to conquer the turtle itself but also are able to protect them from the evil influences that they believe (for reasons to be explained later) result from the eating of its flesh.

This explanation is readily verified by considering an exactly parallel instance. In the pig-eating ceremony at initiation the leaves of the *Hibiscus* or the *Myristica* are not used, and are regarded as valueless. Paddles and ropes are of no use in hunting pigs. The leaves that are used in this ceremony are those of the *Tetranthera lanceifolia*. It is from this tree that are obtained the shafts of pig-arrows. Hence the relation of the tree to the pig is exactly parallel to that of the *Hibiscus* to turtle. It is by making use of the qualities of the wood that they are able to destroy the pig and so they believe that its leaves will enable them to destroy the dangers that result from the eating of the animal.

The leaves of the *Tetranthera* are also used, however, in the ceremony at a girl's first menstruation, and I cannot pass over this without an explanation. It is to be found in the fact that

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pig-arrows are used in fighting, so that the tree comes to have a special relation to the shedding of blood. Plumes of shredded *Tetranthera* wood (made from an old arrow-shaft) must be worn by a homicide during the period of "purification" as a protection against the dangers that are believed to threaten him because he has shed blood. The same plumes were formerly always carried in a dance preceding a fight, and at such times the natives used to rub their bows with the shredded wood in order to ensure success in battle. Thus it is clear that there is a special connection between this tree and the shedding of blood, due to the fact that pig-arrows, of which the shafts are made from it, are used in fighting as well as for killing pigs and other animals. It is probable that this is the explanation of the use of the leaves during the ceremony at a girl's first menstruation.

These examples afford a crucial test of the hypothesis here maintained. Not only is the protective power of these substances explicable by the fact that they are things on which the society depends in its daily life, but the special uses of each of them as amulets are only explicable when we consider the different uses to which they are put as materials.

The fibre of the *Anadendron paniculatum* is used for making thread, bow-strings, the cords of pig-arrows, and for binding the heads and barbs of harpoons and arrows. It has therefore no special relation to either pig or turtle. There is a belief, however, that the plant does possess special protective powers that make it efficacious against certain dangers coming from the sea. A piece of the plant tied round the neck or worn in the belt of a swimmer is believed to protect him from sharks and other dangerous fish. A piece of it crushed and placed in the sea is said to have stopped a violent storm on one occasion. Thus the *Anadendron* seems to possess a special power which makes it a source of protection against dangers from the sea. The same is true of the *Gnetum edule*, though, as this fibre is less valued than that of the *Anadendron*, it is not supposed to be so powerful in its effects. In regard to the specialisation in the use of these two plants as amulets it seems likely that it is due to a notion of opposition between the things of the forest and the things of the sea. The Andamanese live in a double environment; the jungle-

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dwellers live entirely in the forest and have dealings with forest things; they develop knowledge and powers that make them better woodsmen than the coast-dwellers. The latter live by the sea and are chiefly occupied with things of the sea, being skilled in the occupations of fishing and canoeing. There is thus a contrast or opposition between the life of the forest and the life of the shore that runs through all the social life, and I believe, that it is this opposition which explains the belief that the *Anadendron* and the *Gnetum*, which are essentially forest things, are possessed of a quality that makes them contrary or opposed to all things of the sea.

Personal ornaments are made from the fibres that have been mentioned (*Hibiscus*, *Anadendron*, *Gnetum*), and we are justified, I think, in regarding such ornaments as being to some extent amulets. I purchased from a man in the Little Andaman a charm that was hanging round his neck, which he seemed to value highly. I imagined that it might contain a human bone, but when I had unwound the ornamental thread with which it was bound and opened out the covering of bark I found inside the parcel only a carefully folded length of rope made from *Hibiscus* fibre.

There is one fibre from which the natives of the Great Andaman make themselves ornaments, which they do not regularly use in any other way, namely that of the *Ficus laccifera*. We may perhaps regard this as a genuine and demonstrable example of a survival in custom. The natives of the Little Andaman, who, until their recent contact with those of the Great Andaman, did not know the use of the *Anadendron*, use the fibre of the *Ficus* for their bow-strings. We are justified in assuming, I believe, that the natives of the Great Andaman made a similar use of the same fibre before they had learnt to use the *Anadendron*. In those days much of the power that is now attributed to the *Anadendron*, because of its service as the material for bow-strings, must then have been attributed to the *Ficus*. When the substitution of the superior *Anadendron* fibre came about, the belief in the efficacy of the *Ficus* did not disappear, although the ground of the belief (if we may call it so) had ceased to exist. If this be so, then the present use of the *Ficus* fibre as an amulet

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is an example of survival. It may be noted that the qualities of the *Ficus* are supposed to be similar to those of the *Anadendron*. Thus while one medicine-man stopped a storm with *Anadendron*, another did the same thing on another occasion with *Ficus*.

The above examples are sufficient to justify the generalisation that the Andamanese attribute protective power to all those substances on the strength and other qualities of which they rely in order to obtain their food or overcome their enemies. There are one or two other positive instances that have not been mentioned. Bees'-wax, which is used for waxing thread and bow-strings, is believed to have power to keep spirits away and to cure sickness. Cane, which is used by the natives for many different purposes, seems also to have its use as an amulet, for belts and other personal ornaments are made of pieces of cane attached to a length of rope.

Negative instances are more difficult to discover. When I was in the Andamans I had not formulated the explanation that is offered here, and I therefore did not make any search for negative instances that might have afforded a means of testing the value of the hypothesis. I have no satisfactory evidence that protective power is attributed to iron, or to the shells that were formerly used, as iron now is, for the heads and barbs of arrows, but it is quite possible that I may have overlooked evidence that was really there. I do not think that any particular protective properties are attributed to such things as the materials from which baskets are made and the clay that is used for pottery. These things, however, may be regarded as luxuries rather than necessities; they are not of the same immediate service to the society in its fundamental activity (that of providing food) as are weapons and the materials used in them.

There are still two important kinds of amulets that remain to be considered. First, protective power is attributed to the bones of animals, which are made into personal ornaments; these cannot be dealt with until we have considered some of the beliefs relating to food. Secondly, a very high degree of protective power is attributed to human bones, but the discussion of this belief must wait till we have discovered the meaning of the funeral customs of the Andamanese.

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To conclude the present argument, it would seem that the function of the belief in the protective power of such things as fire and the materials from which weapons are made is to maintain in the mind of the individual the feeling of his dependence upon the society; but viewed from another aspect the beliefs in question may be regarded as expressing the social value of the things to which they relate. This term—social value—will be used repeatedly in the later part of this chapter, and it is therefore necessary to give an exact definition. By the social value of anything I mean the way in which that thing affects or is capable of affecting the social life. Value may be either positive or negative, positive value being possessed by any thing that contributes to the well-being of the society, negative value by anything that can adversely affect that well-being.

The social value of a thing (such as fire) is a matter of immediate experience to every member of the society, but the individual does not of necessity consciously and directly realise that value. He is made to realise it indirectly through the belief, impressed upon him by tradition, that the thing in question affords protection against danger. A belief or sentiment which finds regular outlet in action is a very different thing from a belief which rarely or never influences conduct. Thus, though the Andaman Islander might have a vague realisation of the value of *Hibiscus*, for example, that would be something very different from the result on the mind of the individual of the regular use of the leaves of that tree in initiation ceremonies as a protection against unseen dangers. So that the protective uses of such things are really rites or ceremonies by means of which the individual is made to realise (1) his own dependence on the society and its possessions, and (2) the social value of the things in question.

I have had to postpone to the later parts of the chapter the consideration of some of the objects possessing protective power, but I venture to state here three propositions some part of the evidence for which has already been examined, and which will be sufficiently demonstrated, I hope, before the end of the chapter. They are as follows: (1) any object that contributes to the well-being of the society is believed to afford protection

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against evil; (2) the degree of protective power it is believed to possess depends on the importance of the services it actually renders to the society; (3) the kind of special protection it is supposed to afford is often related to the kind of special service that it does actually render.

We were led to the consideration of the protective power of objects through an attempt to understand the meaning of the methods of ornamenting the body in the Andamans. We have seen that some ornaments are worn in order to express the personal value of the individual, while others are worn for the sake of the protection they are believed to afford. We have also seen that one method of painting the body (with white clay) is a means of expressing the personal value of the painted individual. We will next consider the use of the clay called *odu*. This clay is painted on the body of a mourner and is the outward sign of mourning; it is used at certain stages of the initiation ceremonies; it is also regularly used for painting the body with the designs known as *ėra-puli*. According to the rule of method laid down at the beginning of the chapter we must seek some common explanation of these different uses of the same substance.

We may consider, first of all, the patterns (*ėra-puli*) that are made with this clay on the body and face after eating certain foods such as pork and turtle.

Mr Man gives two explanations of the use of these paintings of clay. During the hot season, he says, the natives "endeavour to lessen the discomfort caused by the heat by smearing their bodies with a white-wash of common white clay and water." He adds: "it has long been erroneously believed that they have recourse to this expedient in order to allay the inconvenience which they would otherwise suffer from the bites of mosquitoes and other jungle pests; but the true reason for the practice is, I am well assured, that which I have given above[1]." In another place he says: "After eating pork or turtle they are in the habit of smearing *og* over their bodies with their fingers, in the belief that it affects their breath, and that evil spirits will be unable to detect, and therefore will not be attracted to, them by the

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 76.

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savoury smell of the food of which they have partaken. Again, when heated by travelling or by hunting or dancing, they have recourse to the same wash, but in these cases it is applied thinly[1]."

There are here two explanations of fundamentally different character. First the Andamanese practice of painting their bodies with clay is explained as having a purely utilitarian purpose, being intended to cool them when they are heated. In the second statement the explanation given is that the custom is intended to protect them from danger.

My own observations do not altogether agree with the statements of Mr Man. I found that the natives painted themselves just as much in the cold season as in the hot season. The principal, if not the sole, occasion on which the clay is used is after or immediately before a meal, and therefore generally in the late afternoon or evening when the heat of the day is past. I do not feel so satisfied as Mr Man appears to be, that the clay really has the effect of keeping a person cool, particularly when it is remembered that the painting may consist of a few lines each as broad as a finger. Moreover, Mr Man's explanation does not afford any reason for the fact that the clay is always applied in some sort of pattern. If it were merely to keep himself cool, we should expect to see a man cover himself all over with a plain coating evenly spread over the body. Such an even coating is never used, in the Great Andaman tribes, except by persons mourning for the dead, and is the essential mark of a mourner.

It is easy to explain how Mr Man has fallen into an error in this matter. On many occasions, when I questioned the natives as to their reason for painting themselves with clay I received the answer, "When we have eaten pork or turtle or dugong, we become *ot-kimil* and so we take clay and paint ourselves." Now the word *ot-kimil* in the *Aka-Jeru* language is the word that the natives use to express what we mean by the word "hot." But while "hot" may always be translated by *ot-kimil* or *er-kimil*, the latter word cannot always be adequately rendered in English by the word "hot." Mr Man seems to have supposed that when an Andaman Islander says "hot" he means by the word only what we mean, whereas he really means a great deal more.

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 333.

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It is probable, then, that when a native says that after eating food he is *ot-limil* and therefore paints himself with clay he does not mean simply that he is hot. This will be still more evident when we consider the second explanation of the custom that is given by the natives. Many of those whom I questioned stated that after eating dugong, pork, turtle, etc., the body emits an odour, that this odour may attract the spirits of the jungle or the sea, and that to obviate this they paint themselves with clay. This agrees exactly with what Mr Man says in the second passage quoted above. It is confirmed by other customs. I was told that a man who has eaten dugong will not leave the camp until some time after the dugong meat is all finished, for fear that the spirits may smell him and do him harm. It is to be noted in passing that painting the body with clay does not by any means remove the odour that does actually characterise a native after he has been eating fat meat of any kind. We must be careful, in this instance also, not to assume that an Andaman Islander means by "smell" exactly what we mean by it and nothing more. It will be shown later in the chapter that the Andamanese identify the smell of an object with its active magical principle. One example may be given here to show this. The origin of rheumatism in the legs is explained by the natives as being the result of the common practice of preparing the fibre of the *Anadendron paniculatum* by scraping it on the thigh. During this process, they say, the "smell" of the plant enters the thigh and is the cause of rheumatic or sciatic pains.

The natives give yet a third statement of their reasons for using clay. On many occasions I asked them what would happen if they ate pork or turtle and did not paint themselves. In every case I received the reply that any man who did such a thing would almost certainly be ill.

When a number of persons give three different reasons for one and the same action, and are equally sincere throughout, it is to be presumed that the three different statements are so many different ways of saying one and the same thing. We may therefore conclude that the Andaman Islanders believe that there is a peculiar power in foods (or in some foods) which makes it dangerous to eat them. This danger may be expressed by saying that

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to protect them from danger and to bring them luck, is therefore very similar to their belief in the protective power of the materials used for weapons and implements. The consideration of the apparent contradiction mentioned above has led us to a more exact statement of the real beliefs in these matters. They believe, we may say, that all the things from the jungle and the sea of which they make use as food or as materials, are dangerous unless approached with proper ritual precautions, but when so approached they become sources of strength and well-being and also of protection from unseen dangers.

To return to the main argument, which was concerned with the meaning of the patterns of clay painted on the body after eating the more dangerous foods, it would seem that this action is really a rite or ceremony, of the same general character as other ceremonial customs of the Andamans. It is an action required by custom, the performance of which on appropriate occasions serves to keep alive in the mind of the individual a certain system of sentiments necessary for the regulation of conduct in conformity to the needs of the society. By it the individual is made to feel (or to act as though he felt) that his life is one of continually repeated dangers from which he can only be preserved by conforming to the customs of the society as they have been handed down by tradition. He is made to feel that the eating of food is not merely the satisfaction of an animal appetite, but an act of communion, that the food itself is something "sacred" (if we may use that word in the sense of the original Latin "sacer"). It serves also, like any other rite in which all join, to make the individual feel the solidarity and unity of the community; all share in the common repast and the common danger, and each man sees on his neighbour the clay with which he himself is daubed.

Of course it is probable that the Andamanese custom of painting the body after eating, like our own grace before and after meat, with which it is parallel, tends to become a formality accompanied by little real feeling, but it can be shown, I believe, that such customs do possess a real value—a real psychological function—in keeping alive ideas and sentiments that will on occasion play an important part in influencing conduct.

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affections. Those natives who have been long with us, have great faith in our medicines, especially in the efficacy of quinine for curing fever, from which, as exposure is very trying to their constitutions, they suffer greatly when living in the clearings we have made at Port Blair.

4. For a cold in the head they merely remain at home and nurse themselves, crouching over the fire; for a cough, sea-water is often drunk, or they will chew the thick portion of the long leaves of a plant called *jī·ni-* (of the *Alpinia* species), and when the bitter juice has been extracted and swallowed, tie the chewed fibre round the neck; if benefit be not derived from this, they then take a piece of the upper portion of the stem of the *Calamosagus laciniosus*, called *pôr-*, and, removing the bark, chew the rest, and swallow the sap. Many cures having been attributed to the wonderful properties of the two descriptions of *chū·lnga-*, one or two quarts daily are prescribed to the unhappy patient, until the cough leaves him.

5. In cases of rheumatism and paralysis, a *chàu·ga-tâ-* is tied round the parts affected, and *chū·lnga-*, moist as found, is rubbed into them: if no relief is experienced within a day or so, warm water is poured over the suffering members, which are then shampooed; should no improvement result, even after these measures, recourse is had to scarification; this is done with a quartz or glass flake, by a woman, generally the wife or one near of kin to the sufferer. It has been noticed that but few of those who have been attacked by rheumatism in the jungle ever regain the full use of their limbs.

6. In phthisis, or when any internal organ is diseased, steps are taken by the friends of the patient to defeat the machinations of the evil one, to whom the victim's sufferings are attributed; to this end, one or more *chàu·ga-tâ-* are first fastened tightly over the seat of pain, a lump of black beeswax, *tō·bul-pid-*,[1] is then held over a fire till it begins to melt, when it is instantly applied, being passed rapidly over the flesh; the wax which adheres is not removed, but wears off in a few days. The patient is also subjected to pressure with the hands by a relative or friend of the same sex, while an attendant frequently sucks the skin. Scarification is the *dernier ressort* when the bad symptoms increase.[2]

7. Every attention is paid to the wants and wishes of the sick, and the friends do all in their power to effect recovery, but no charms, excepting the *chàu·ga-tâ-*, are employed in the hope of

[1] *Vide* Appendix B, No. 57.

[2] As many bad cases of lung disease among those in the homes have been successfully treated with cod liver oil, they have now great faith in that medicine.

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averting or curing illness; after recovery, no ceremonies of purification take place.

8. With respect to these necklaces of human bones, it should be stated that it is not considered necessary that the bones used for this purpose should have belonged to an adult, those of a child or of one long since dead, are considered equally efficacious; the belief is that they cure diseases, and shield the wearer in some measure from the machinations of evil spirits, through the intervention of the disembodied spirit, who is supposed to be gratified by, and aware of, the respect thus paid to his memory. Loose teeth obtained from human skulls and jaw bones, are sometimes strung together as necklaces, or, if too few for such a purpose, they are included among the pieces of bone which are broken up to form the *chàwga-tâ-*; turtle bones are also sometimes added under similar circumstances.[1]

9. The skull and jawbone are carried, either separately or together, merely as mementoes, and are not accredited with any peculiar virtues.

10. During pregnancy, the women eat in moderation, but delight in as great a variety of food as possible, telling their husbands day by day what to procure for them;[2] they are also in the habit of taking as much active exercise as possible, as they believe it conduces to an easy *accouchement*, and the same reason is given for the custom, common among them, of consuming small quantities of *tâ'la-ōy-*[3] from time to time; but this practice may be traced with more probability to the fact that the appetite of persons in an anæmic condition is generally fanciful and depraved, such substances as "lime, chalk, or slate pencil being sometimes greedily devoured by them."

11. When about to be confined, the custom is for the husband, and some of the woman's female friends, to attend on her; she is placed in a sitting posture, the left leg is stretched out, and the right knee brought up, so as to enable her to clasp it with her arms. Her husband supports her back and presses her as desired, while her female friends hold a leaf screen, *kâ'pajâ'tnga-* over the lower part of her person, and assist her, to the best of their ability, in the delivery and in the removal of the after-birth; the umbilical cord is severed by means of a *Cyrena* shell (now a steel blade is often used), and when the infant has been washed in cold water, its skin is gently scraped with the shell. Publicity is not courted on these occasions, as has been asserted,[3] but all, save those whose services are required, continue their occupations as usual. Soon after the delivery, some warm

[1] Further allusion to this subject will be made under "Tabu."
[2] *Vide* Appendix E, No. 58.
[3] *Vide* Mouat, p. 294.

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no coloured pigments or other preparations are rubbed into the wounds, which are left to heal of themselves: before leaving this subject I would mention that the face is never tattooed.

Painting.—1. Besides the permanent tattooing decorations, these savages employ three kinds of pigments for the further adornment of their dusky persons; and from the mode of their application it can be at once ascertained whether the individual be sick, or sorry, or whether he has taken, or is about to take, part in a merry-making.

2. No distinction with regard to rank or sex is made in the designs executed, yet, though these are not very numerous, no two persons are ordinarily painted exactly in the same way, as the pattern traced may be in one case on the chest, in another on the arm, in a third on the face, and so on; a temporary restriction is, however, laid upon the unmarried, who are not permitted to use the paint to their necks, either by way of ornament, or to relieve their pains.[1]

3. We have seen that according to their traditions[2] this was one of the arts in which *Pū·luga-* instructed their first parents, and though temporarily lost after the Deluge it was revived by the accidental re-discovery of the necessary pigments: it may, therefore, be reasonably inferred that the practice is a very ancient one among these tribes.

4. The materials used are *ōg-*, *tâ·la-ōg-*, and *kòi·ob-*, which are applied, respectively, as a wash and in designs, more or less minute, with the nail or the tips of the fingers.

5. The first (*ōg-*), is a pale "whitish-grey" clay,[3] which is mixed with water and smeared thickly over the entire person with the palms of the hand, to denote mourning;[4] a lump of the same compound (*del·a-*) is also placed on the head at these times: hence the term *â·kà-ōg-*, a mourner.

6. After eating pork or turtle they are also in the habit of smearing *ōg-* over their bodies with their fingers, in the belief that it affects their breath, and that evil spirits will be unable to detect, and therefore will not be attracted to, them by the savoury smell of the food of which they have partaken. Again, when heated by travelling, or by hunting or dancing, they have recourse to the same wash, but in these cases it is applied thinly.[5]

[1] *Vide ante* "Medicine," paragraph 2.

[2] *Vide ante* "Mythology," paragraphs 9 and 27.

[3] "I may remark that the natives far West . . . . . when mourning for the dead, paint the whole of the body of a white or yellow colour; while in the East of New Guinea the natives for a similar event paint themselves with black" (*vide* paper by Signor S. M. D'Albertis: "Travels in New Guinea," Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. vi, p. 215.)

[4] *Vide ante* "Death and Burial," paragraph 2.

[5] *Vide* "Anatomy and Physiology," paragraph 5.

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37. *bē·wa-tâ-* ... made of red coral.
38. *râ·ta-ô·la-tâ-* .. „ small sea shells.
39. *rē·keto-tâ-*[1] .. „ *Hemicardium unedo* shells.
40. *ngâ·tya-tâ-*[2] and *jū·mu-ta-* „ mangrove seed tops.
41. *gar·en len pī·d-* .. „ *Dentalium octogonum* and children's hair.[3]

42. *râb-*.[4] Fine netting, plain or ornamented with shells, worn occasionally by both sexes as necklaces, armlets, &c. Baby-slings (item 24), bows, pig-spears, &c., are sometimes ornamented with pieces of this netting.

[462] 43. *râ-*. Ornamental cord, made by men from the yellow skin of an orchid root, and worn round the waist intertwined sometimes with fibres of the *Melochia velutina* (Andam., *al·aba-*). It is also occasionally interwoven with fibres of the *Anodendron paniculatum* (Andam., *yō·lba-*), in order to make ornamental fastenings for arrows, turtle harpoons, and personal adornments.

[751] 44. *chàu·ga-tâ-*.[5] Human bone necklaces sometimes ornamented with *Dentalium octogonum*. These are worn as charms during illness by friends or relatives of the deceased, and may be often seen tied tightly round the part in pain; they are also worn when in health to ward off disease.[6]

45. *chàu·ga l'ōt chē·ta-*.[7] Human skull, carried *in memoriam* by relatives of the deceased.[8]

46. *chàu·ga l'â·kà ē·kib-*.[9] Human jaw, which is carried in a similar manner.[10]

412 47. *pī·licha-*.[11] Boar's tusk, used for planing bows, paddles, &c., as it answers this purpose, in *their* hands, admirably, it is much valued; when required for use the inner edge is sharpened with a *Cyrena* shell.

48. *tai·li-ban·a-*.[12] Stone hammer, which the men now use principally in beating out iron for arrow-heads, &c., and the women when making bone necklaces.

49. *chī·di-*.[13] *Pinna* shell, used as plates for food, or as receptacles for pigments.

[1] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 45.
[2] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 73.
[3] An interesting description of these various necklaces will be found in a paper by Dr. Allen Thomson, F.R.S., Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. xi, p. 295.
[4] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 34.
[5] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 46.
[6] *Vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraphs 2, 7, 8.
[7] *Vide* Plate IX, fig. 7.
[8] *Vide* Part II, "Death and Burial," paragraphs 5 and 19.
[9] *Vide* Plate IX, fig. 7*a*.
[10] *Vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraph 9.
[11] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 65.
[12] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 72.
[13] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 26.

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364 spot for centuries leads to the formation of kitchen-middens [1]. In the tempo-
[361] rary camps something similar happens: the only difference consists in the fact that rubbish dumps only accumulate at the back of the temporary shelters, as a consequence of their peculiar shape that I shall not describe here. These
[136] dumps are heaven-sent love nests for insects of many species, mostly flies of a metallic green colour. They follow the Onge from camp to camp and thrive on scraps from human meals. When travelling in Little Andaman I was unmistakably warned of the nearby presence of Onge camps by the appearance of those familiar living beings.

136 The filth that coats the floors of communal Onge huts offers an ideal
[356] breeding ground also for myriads of fleas. Dogs spread them all over Little Andaman. Owing to the fact that the communal huts are deserted for months at a time during the dry season, the fleas become hungry and assault human
123 beings vehemently whenever possible. When visiting empty communal huts I myself, and the persons with me, were plagued by such assaults. Fleas advanced suddenly from feet to head in thick, shimmering brown layers, covering first our legs. We were obliged to strip and douse ourselves with insect-repellents.
136 As for other parasites, including ticks and mosquitos, equally plentiful in Little
[825] Andaman, the Onge do not appear to be inconvenienced by them.
764 The communal huts are used for another purpose as well, unhygienic but of high ethnological interest: the interment of human corpses. When they die, the inmates are buried beneath their beds. In other words, communal huts are also cemeteries. Many human skeletons are found by digging under the beds. Until 1952 this fact was unknown about the Andaman Islanders although it is encountered in all Onge communal huts without exception. An analysis of
775 this custom led to further discoveries: the Onge wish to compel the spirit of a deceased person to remain close to the living as a protection, so they offer it the communal hut for an abode, the idea being that a spirit cannot wander far from the bones of its former body. A series of Onge practices point to this
[727] belief: felled enemies must be burned and reduced to ashes in order to render them harmless. Their hostile souls, according to the Onge, rise toward the sky in smoke as the bones are consumed. For the same reason, bones of relatives
[301] are fashioned into necklaces. The most conspicuous of these is the *ibidanghe*,
[765] worn generally by women and young girls, which is made from a decorated
[751] human jawbone. The aim is to obtain the assistance of the departed relation in fighting illness and bad luck. Direction in hunting, fishing and even quar-
[777] relling is supposed to come from the dead kept close to the living. We can trace this belief on the connection between bones and souls to a remote origin:
[191] Southern Asia megaliths had, in my opinion, no other cause for offering shelter to spirits and promoting useful relations between the living and the dead. I reached this conclusion after studying the contemporary habits of Travancore mountain and other Indian tribes, particularly the Munda. In Nias we find traces of the same customs as among different peoples of Indonesia and Oceania, who

[1] I discussed this at the two international anthropological congresses of 1952 (Vienna) and 1956 (Philadelphia), and have more to say on the subject in my book about the Onge.

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3. Food

In the absence of men, women also are good at fishing inside the coral reefs. They do this with two small nets used together. Their catch generally consists of brilliantly coloured fish with yellow, red, green, blue, black and white stripes forming varied and attractive designs. The Onge eat all fish without discrimination. My Indian collaborators, on the other hand, considered the coloured fish dangerous to their health and refused to cook them ; the Sacred Vedas, in fact, advise the avoidance of brigthly hued fish and of fish without scales. I wanted to try both kinds, and found them perfectly palatable, tasty and harmless.

No tool, used for any purpose by the Onge, ever gets a cleaning. Cleanliness, I repeat, is unknown in Little Andaman. See how food is prepared and disposed of ! Care is taken only not to throw big pieces of meat intended for cooking directly on the bare ground ; but once it is cooked, food is treated with the utmost disregard for dirt, dust, cobwebs and other such things. It is usually left lying around on large leaves spread out for the purpose. The remains of the Onge's orgiastic meals are kept out of reach of the dogs on the ceiling of the huts, to be covered with flies when no fire is lit directly below. Sand and grit may get wedged annoyingly in the teeth, but not such impalpable things as dust or cobwebs. The use of unclean food is not repugnant to the Onge. The same can be said for water polluted by dogs drinking and bathing in it, or by the presence of putrefying carcases. In the west of Little Andaman I saw some Onge avidly drinking from pools of a blackish water with a revolting sulphurous smell. After thoroughly filtering and boiling it, I too used such water, for it was the only water available in the neighborhood. This caused no ill effects. My Indian men considered it perfectly healthy and invigorating, and drank it safely in its natural condition.

The Onge eat with their unwashed fingers, without the help of tools. On rare occasions they use platters made of the flattened-out stems – or bracts – of *areca* palms. They sometimes carry these platters when travelling, but of course never wash them although they become coated in rancid, greasy filth. They soon assume a dark colour and a truly revolting appearance – aside from the awful smell. A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN's statement – that the Andamanese paint their bodies to neutralize the unpleasant smell of food that clings to them after their orgiastic feedings – shows only indirect knowledge of the life and manners of those people. Even the horrible flatulence that follows their pork orgies is not considered an inconvenience ; yet it is much more revolting than all the other body odours.

Although the Onge observe few hygienic precautions they do follow a number of medical practices, not all devoid of beneficial effects. Here are a few more remarks on their eating and drinking habits. For about six months of the year, between November and April, water is scarce in Little Andaman. Every kind of fresh water is then considered good by the Onge, regardless of whether it is a murky infusion of rotting leaves or afloat with the putrefied

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and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals. Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young sucking-pigs are avoided, as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surrounding fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cue-changhĕghĕ*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very

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common in the Andamans, said by RADCLIFFE-BROWN (p. 273) to be eaten by the Andaman Islanders as a protection against rheumatism, is never killed. For some superstitious reason the Onge are simply horrified at the thought of touching such an enormous flying bat. Among the fruits, those of a plant whose wood has such a revolting smell that it is known, in English, as "stool-tree", are believed to have exceptional protective properties for the human body. The fruits themselves smell even worse than the wood, but this, to the Onge, makes them appetizing rather than disgusting. Concerning honey, and the many sugary fruits of the jungle that are available all the year round, the Onge luckily ignore the simple method of distilling alcohol. No intoxicating drink reaches Little Andaman from the outer world, whereas in Great Andaman alcohol, together with imported syphilis, was one of the main causes of depopulation. No syphilis appears as yet to have reached Little Andaman. This is also confirmed by the research carried out by Dr. HERMANN LEHMANN of London's St. Bartholomew's Hospital, during February 1953 in my Onge camp in Labanare (north-east coast of Little Andaman).

II. Effects on the People's Lives

The islanders die young, specially the men. The majority of them succumb before reaching the age of 20; most of the survivors die between 20 and 40; the rest – with a very few exceptions – before 50. Women, after marriage, follow a similar pattern: the death rate among women, however, is slightly different owing to a less corrosive sexual life. Some women may live to the age of sixty, but both sexes age soon, appearing older than their years when still in their twenties. The short Onge span of life recalls conditions which apparently prevailed among prehistoric and protohistoric men. Palaeolithic man died at an earlier age than modern man. The Onge today, in many respects, behaves as palaeolithic man behaved countless centuries ago. – Infant mortality is high; the first five days of life are the most critical for the Onge, owing, in part, to the hard life led by mothers even during pregnancy, which often causes functional damage to the placenta. Delivery is generally easy and traumatic injury rarely occurs; but premature births are common, and so are malformations and other anomalies. Imperfect infants are quickly eliminated by their parents. As a result, only a small number of children are allowed to grow up, but these appear normal. There are no blind and no deaf-and-dumb people in Little Andaman. I saw only two instances of incipient lameness: in an unmarried boy of about twenty and in a young married woman. Only robust infants can survive.

The Onge, so careful about their food, are completely indifferent to something else that is considered very harmful in continental and insular regions close to the Andamans. There, menstruating women are often segregated and considered harmful to the entire community. Not so in Little Andaman, where the remedies applied in the circumstance are extremely primitive (cf. supra) and could probably be traced to palaeolithic man. I saw nothing

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841 171 resembling these practices in any other part of the world. Never hitherto described, they should be carefully considered. This would require a lengthy description, for which there is no space here. We may recall that menstruating Onge women are allowed to circulate freely at all times. An interesting detail [751] is that the *naquinēghē* of first menstruations are worn by relations around their neck as having health-giving properties. The women, as we know, use special 841 soft, long leaves, collected for them by their husbands, as absorbents. They [824] are the leaves of Myristica longifolia or of Tretanthera lanceofolia both species serving the purpose. They are applied under the *naquinēghē* and drawn back between the legs to be secured above the buttocks. – Sexual intercourse is [834] forbidden during the menstrual period even by the Onge : illness – a swelling [753] of the arms or legs – would follow. A curious theory about the reason for menstruation in very young girls is that it is a result of previous sexual contacts stimulated by nose rubbing – the Onge substitute for kissing. They ignore the 892 unhygienic practice of kissing with the lips, and never even kiss their children. Only nose rubbing is practiced. The anatomical structure of the Onge nose, which almost totally lacks nasal bones and is very fleshy, may explain this transference of sensation from nearby regions, i. e. the lips.

844 Births take place in the forest and are surrounded by no hygienic precautions or disinfection as conceived by us. Clay is applied to stem puerperal bleeding, without provoking infection. The only assistant is the pregnant woman's husband, and sometimes one or two old women. Their ability equals that of a herdsman delivering his goat of a kid. No inconvenience arises, in either instance, from lack of precautions. – The tiny, tender and graceful bodies [751] of Onge infants are smeared with ochre and light-coloured clay for hygienic purposes. This is done immediately after birth, and affords some protection against the teeming legions of mosquitos and ticks that plague Little Andaman. The infant is never washed in water, not even at the very moment of birth. The placenta is buried 30 or 40 cms deep, under the bed of naked branches upon which the mother delivered her baby.

842 143 An argument that deserves much attention concerns the possible link between lack of hygiene and sterility among the Onge. A vast number of married couples have no offspring, thereby threatening their group with extinction. Consanguinity could be given as a cause : let us examine it. No doubt the Onge are related to each other as a consequence of long interbreeding in their island with no foreigners admitted. These conditions afford an ideal field for studying the effects of endogamy on man. Nowhere in the world, as far as I know, are a people so isolated as in Little Andaman. Inbreeding has existed at 100 % ever since remote times. In other words, the Onge would seem to be the most highly inbred human population known up to the present. Could this fact alone, aside from unhealthy habits, explain their present widespread sterility ? Special 174 studies on the subject should be undertaken, keeping in mind that the Onge have certainly inhabited Little Andaman for thousands of years, on the evidence of my excavations in their kitchen-middens.

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291 754 *naquinẽghẽ* exposes the former owner to harm. Ill-disposed persons could use it for black magic practices. I collected specimens of this garment, all of them, however, brand-new – for the above-mentioned reason. To avoid trouble to the owner, nobody is allowed to touch the *naquinẽghẽ*, which is worn in front of the vulva. To touch it is a deadly offence. Aside from the *naquinẽghẽ*, Andaman 842 colonists attribute the natives' sterility to their abhorrence of salt. Another 263 opinion would have it that the lack of salt transforms human saliva into poison: the Jarawas, by spitting on their arrows render them poisonous. The absurdity of this belief is so evident that it requires no confutation. The Onge refuse to eat salt because they consider it unhealthy, or, to say the least, disgusting.

III. Illnesses and Onge Curative Methods

164 Few illnesses affect the Onge, but they succumb to those few with surprising speed. Often they become seriously ill for mysterious reasons and in spite of their robust appearance. Smallpox, tuberculosis and poliomyelitis are unknown in Little Andaman, although they sometimes strike in the nearby Nicobars. Measles broke out on the island on more than one occasion, killing off all the inhabitants of several communal huts, which I later found deserted and in ruins. With regard to syphilis, the Indian Census of 1931 quotes an old remark of PORTMAN's concerning a few individuals considered by him as infected. This was later denied.

[752] [123] Onge women are more resistant to illness than men. Wounds heal promptly in both sexes, without the aid of remedies. A few of the older men, however, had suppurating sores on their legs, slow to disappear even when disinfected and treated by me with European medicines. No similar sores were found on women. On the other hand, women suffer more than men from ringworm, mainly in the umbilical region. Nothing is done to rid them of it because the discomfort is slight. I suggested an Indian cure made with the leaves of the neem tree, Melia azedarach, very common in Southern Asia [123] where it is considered sacred. I imported the plant to Little Andaman, but the Onge displayed no interest in it. I found a single instance of leucoderma, in a woman with whitish spots on her hands and lips. I could get no reliable information about the incidence of cancer, but it appears to be rare on the island. No baldness is to be seen in Little Andaman, and I found few traces of [142] greying hair, as the Onge die young. A transversal bregmatic furrow is noticeable [482] in all individuals, male and female, as a consequence of carrying loads hung from their heads by a strip of bark. The Onge start doing this in childhood. An artificial, unintentional deformation of the skull is the result of that uncomfortable habit.

751 302 [386] For hygienic reasons the Little Andaman aborigines paint their bodies with refined clay and ochre of various shades, mainly reddish. This gives the women occasion to embellish the bodies of their husbands with an endless variety of geometrical designs. Every year I found changes in their patterns, and I

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documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic: an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on.

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike – both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding.

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame.

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy – an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtâ of Tambô-ê-buiê, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy!

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor

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no specialized physicians, the Onge do not understand that payment can be exacted for medical care. This stems from the fact that wages are not considered by those happy people as payment for any kind of work whatsoever, but only as a gift. I realized this when I tried to pay my guides after our extenuating marches through the jungle : in order to avoid offending the natives that we had casually met in the course of our trip, I had to give equal reward to everybody.

The Onge consider some men or women better endowed than others with anti-malefic influence ; but these too neither demand nor receive wages for their services. Evil spirits or evil persons are believed to be principally responsible for illness. A series of superstitions and remarkable habits derive from this belief. The above-mentioned precautions concerning the *naquinēghē* are among them. For identical reasons they carefully hide hair cuttings, but not nail parings, for the simple reason that nails are never cut but worn down by digging for edible roots, fishing, and other rough work. Superstition, as we know, is also the reason for painting the body to prevent fever and other ills.

In the depths of their jungle the Onge appear to practice some kind of witchcraft. On several occasions I noticed the mysterious behaviour of some natives travelling with me. Occasionally a man left our marching column to examine the inside of a huge hollow tree and signal to his friends. They did not prevent me from looking into the hollow, where I saw only a simple structure of short sticks resembling a trap without being one. The Onge do not use traps ; moreover, those structures were far too flimsy to catch anything. Often, two or three men assembled in consultation, rearranged the sticks that had probably been dislodged by the passage of lizards, crabs or other small animals, and walked away silently. I could get no explanation on the matter. Certainly the Onge are sagacious observers of animal and vegetable life and have deep knowledge of their hidden properties. Some trees are probably used for magical purposes, but, I insist, it is impossible as yet to affirm it. The structures in question consisted of four vertical sticks, about 30 cms long, joined at the top by four more sticks of approximately the same length, placed horizontally. The result was a box-like frame, loose and unsecured. The slightest disturbance, such as a light breeze, could destroy the flimsy construction. As far as I could guess they invested those structures with curative properties, but in what manner remains a mystery. I noticed analogous practices among Central African Pygmies and other primitives.

It is very clear that the Onge dread illness and magic spells, for they consider themselves at a loss in fighting such evils. Unhygienic habits are of no importance to them.

Resting is considered favorable to good health. The Onge indulge voluptuously in rest, interrupting it, however, with too frequent sexual excursions. They mainly rest from doing nothing, because 90 % of their time is spent in what, for them, is the most agreeable manner of enjoying life.

In mid-March, when the honey harvest reaches its peak, the Onge guzzle

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262 immense quantities of it together with pork. I was with them three times when
this recurred, so I could observe their behaviour exhaustively. With their
517 bellies full, the natives rest. Their only activity is body painting, performed by
302 the women on the skin of their peacefully sleeping husbands. Designs change
178 from time to time as I said before, according to the women's inventiveness.
Each family challenges the others in renewing their patterns. The best are later
reproduced until the next change. From year to year I noticed no real evolution
in this rudimentary art, but a cyclical fashion, with temporary preference, in
males and females alike, for some geometrical designs, unconnected with what-
ever kind of food they had been eating. This contradicts the published af-
114 firmations of several authors, who allege that the Andamanese paint special
302 patterns in special colours for different kinds of food. There is nothing more
[262] false, at least with reference to the Onge. Merry feasting, whether on pork
[751] turtle, dugong, fish or honey, leads to a period of rest and body decoration –
[515] always in similar patterns and colours – with the unique purpose of preventing
illness. We might say that painting the body is equal to cleaning it, but this
is quite unintentional. A curious exception to the Onge's filthy habits is the
264 practice of sweeping the floor after solemn banquets in communal huts. The
356 surface of the floor consists of unpacked earth hardened by casual tramping.
342 When it is dry, sweeping raises a heavy dust that fills the hut to the ceiling.
251 It deposits there on the wooden beams where the Onge like to store cooked
262 victuals. So they eat their food, as I said before, coated with dust, no matter
412 how thick. A brush without a handle is used to sweep the floor ; it is 80 cms
long and no thicker than a man's wrist. It is one of the nicest tools made by
the Onge, and consists of strong, hard, elastic palm fibres bound together with
strips of rattan. The dirt is simply thrown out all around the hut, by pushing
356 it under the roof mats that never reach the ground.

These notes offer a first glimpse into a peculiar aspect of Onge life. It is
114 to be deplored that these vanishing people have not yet been exhaustively
studied, notwithstanding their anthropological interest and high biological
significance.

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the finger-tips and almost pink, with pale chocolate moons and yellowish-brown palms and soles. In the adults the nails and soles of the feet remain pale, the palms being a little darker. The head, and the visible buccal and nasal epithelia, were almost black, and the gums were pink, as was the inside of the lips, with dark petechiae, in adults very noticeable, at the base of the teeth and over the tongue and palate. The cheeks, however, were a reddish-brown, although the whole skin was already showing signs of darkening after twelve hours. Nasal cartilage was minimal, but that of the ears well-developed. The darkest area of skin were the forehead, eye sockets, lids, nipples and genitalia.

In general, therefore, the infant's skin was very slightly lighter than that of the adults, though before I could be sure of this I had to wash off the thick layer of ochre which is smeared over the unwashed infants immediately after birth. As the infants are extremely carefully protected from the sun by 'umbrella' hats made of lobed palm leaves, the darkening, which is complete by the end of the first year, is clearly biological and is not effected by tanning. As, however, the Onges interchange or 'adopt' children freely, it was impossible to carry out any proper colorimetric observations.

I saw no albinos in the Onges, usually fairly common in dark-skinned peoples. I saw several in Africa, with apparently normal parents. Some African peoples destroy albinos at birth as they do those with deformities, and the Andamanese may do the same, as I saw little congenital deformity (see, however, p. 46). Fear of being held responsible for disasters which befall the group carries great weight, and it is possible that the two cases of abnormality which I did see did not manifest symptoms at birth. Twins, however, are clearly (and gladly) accepted, so eager are the Onges to have children.

It was already clear in the infant that it would have the somatic characteristics common to all Negritos as regards the proportions of the body, the form and dimensions of the head, absence of prognathism, comparatively fine lips, nose and ears, black skin, and woolly hair, and would be well below 1·5 metres in height when fully grown. Above all, the Andamanese have a large forehead, very wide-angled jaw and large mouths, with the upper lips not invariably full, as in Negroes. Many Onges, in fact, have fine features,

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Western standards taciturn or sly, and the Negro peoples, who frequently manifest complete abandonment in their amusement. Obscenities appear to be an unfailing source of amusement to the Onges, who indulge in them at every opportunity, even with strangers, and the obscene dances of the womenfolk are a continual source of pleasure. The exchange of obscenities is, indeed, a sign of friendship, and I found that vulgarity was invariably immensely successful in provoking hilarity; any subsequent negotiations were always peaceable and satisfactory.

An extension of this vulgarity is an infantile vanity, not without sexual significance. The care with which their bodies are painted nearly every day is one aspect of this vanity; the more a wife loves her husband the more magnificent the designs she executes on him. The paintings on their bodies reach a peak every two or three days, as the Onges fear illness and death if they are not newly daubed, and the face at least must be continually painted, with at least smears on the chest, arms and legs. A man returning from an exceptionally successful hunting trip is met by his wife with a specially unusual and elaborate design, which she carries out with great devotion. During each of my visits to the island the Onges would rush up to show me their embellishments as soon as they were finished, and took a delight in standing in front of my camera, even though they had no idea what it was for.

It is curious that unlike most primitive peoples, the Onges do not practise tattooing, which is one of the simplest ways, if not *the* simplest, in which such peoples satisfy their craving for physical admiration. The other Andamanese do, puncturing the skin with tiny slivers of obsidian or quartz, but the Onges paint with ochre instead. They love, too, to weave garlands of fruit, flowers and leaves from the forest, returning to the camp laden with them, men and women alike, delighted with their own beauty. This divergence of customs in peoples essentially of the same stock, but separated for long periods of time into endogamous isolates, is very remarkable.

An intense preoccupation with sexual attraction and activity has led to the prevalence of aberration. All the Onges have homosexual tendencies. I became aware of this during my first visit to Little Andaman on one of my longer expeditions, when I had taken only men with me, and on subsequent occasions I therefore allowed the men to bring their wives. The effect of long periods of absence on